



HIGHER EDUCATION SPECIAL

OSMANIA COURIER

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VC for restoring Brand Osmania

Cometh the hour, cometh the man. This aptly suits Prof. S.Ramachandram, the newly-appointed Vice Chancellor of Osmania University. He arrives after a turbulent period of Telangana agitation when Brand Osmania took a severe beating and is riddled with a host of problems- finances, students' discontentment, administration and NAAC Accreditation even as the University is poised to celebrate the centenary next year. An academican of distinguished pedigree, Prof Ramachandram rose from the ranks of a Lecturer to Professor and was involved in major automation initiatives of the Telangana Government. The Professor is a dignified, confident, genial former Principal of the University College of Engineering with a perfect smile. Prof. Ramachandram's fierce determination, clarity of thought and self-belief are textbook leadership qualities with the potential for taking on the toughest tasks and steering the University to greater heights of excellence. In a free-wheeling hour-long interview to Osmania Courier, Prof Ramachandram bares his mind on his vision, goals and the action plans on how he intends to solve the thorny issues facing the University.

Vision, Goals and Challenges

Unveiling the vision for the University, Prof. Ramachandram said: "The thrust will be on empowering students with skills and competency levels to tackle challenges faced by the society from local to global level."

The 57-year-old Vice Chancellor spelt out the goals he has set to restore the past glory to the University. Others include: restoring academic discipline and strengthening the teaching learning process, establishing the state-of-the-art and research faculties, good governance with transparency and accountability at all levels, modernizing the university, digitizing, introducing skill-based courses, encouraging students to become entrepreneurs by establishing incubation centers and attracting and retaining world-class talent. "If one works with a plan and a good team of faculty, these goals are achievable," he observed.

Commenting on the University with

Potential for Excellence (UPE) status, Prof. Ramachandram said that the University was awarded the excellence status in the focused area of Materials Research. The other projects are setting up a Centre for Multi Lingual Translation and Governance. Faculty members and research scholars are working on various projects mentioned in the proposal made to the University Grants Commission, he revealed and added, "We will periodically review the progress on the projects under UPE with the Principal investigators and the Coordinator and the faculty involved. The objectives, expected outcomes, present status, the gaps will be thoroughly scrutinized and a concrete plan would be formulated to accomplish the outcomes. The UPE status gives the University an opportunity to bolster the research facilities further", he remarked.

In addition to the research under the UPE, the University is formulating a strategic plan for the ensuing five years. The plan will emerge out of the discussions with the Faculty members and identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, and further crystallize the thrust areas to work on.

When asked about the challenges he is likely to face, Prof. S. Ramachandram replied, "First is the block grant from the Government. It needs to be hiked. Mr. K.Chandrashekar Rao, the Chief Minister of Telangana has assured me of the Government's support to tide over the problem. Next, is the recruitment of faculty members which did not take place during the past three to four years. The Government has been apprised of the staff position and was requested to help the University. The government is willing to help the university to overcome these challenges," he said.

"Very shortly, we are going to present a status report which encompasses all the issues and challenges faced by the University. All the Vice Chancellors in the State would converge at a symposium to discuss the common problems in their respective universities and a comprehensive report will be prepared to Government's scrutiny", he revealed.

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TSCHE looks beyond gross enrolment

Promoting quality education, revising and designing syllabus with an objective to enhance skills for employability, inculcating the spirit of social responsibility among students and monitoring the overall development of the student is the vision of Professor Thummala Papi Reddy, Chairman, Telangana State Council for Higher Education (TSCHE)

In an exclusive interview to *Osmania Courier*, Prof. Reddy said that the newly introduced Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) is aimed at skill orientation and provides flexibility in career development. It is expected to be a game changer in the higher education as it gives students the choice to choose from among various subjects. In this context, the semester system has been introduced in all colleges and universities in the state. Terminal evaluation system will be dispensed with and students will be assessed on a continuous basis and appear for semester exams by scrapping the traditional annual exams.

The Council has decided on a common academic calendar, exam pattern and assessment. "We are taking steps to motivate Principals, identify teachers and conduct orientation courses to achieve the intended outcomes of CBCS", he observed. The challenges in higher education are due to combination of objective and subjective factors. Giving details, the Chairman said that the quality of administration staff, facilities and finances include subjective factors.

The Telangana government is serious about improving the financial health of the institutions and evolving a policy for recruitment of quality faculty, he stated and further added that the earlier Universities attracted talented students but today most students do not show interest. Today, even the elite students from the disadvantaged sections are not joining higher education

Stating that there is an urgent need to restructure the education



Prof. T. Papi Reddy, Chairman, TSCHE

system, he asserted that it should be such that it attracts students. The conventional system is not in sync with the skills and demands of the job market. There are jobs available but the archaic approach fails to enhance skills and provide sustainable employment, he said. The major challenge is to forge a strong linkage between the courses offered and the emerging job market and suit the needs of the economy for the betterment of the society. "The current education system is not providing meaningful employment. In the real economy, the courses are not related to the jobs," he pointed out. The Council chairman, who was earlier with Kakatiya University, was averse to the idea of expanding higher education. "Mere expansion of higher education may not help. Just to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio, opening the same type of colleges and courses is ill advised as it could create more unemployed graduates. We need empowered youth which is likely to take a longer time and is an arduous task."

The emerging economy requirements have to be addressed through the academia which can help to create jobs and help future generations. "We should be able to train till the 12th standard so that a person can earn a minimum of Rs. 15,000 per month and settle the youth when they are more productive", he observed.

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“The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows”

- Sydney J. Harris

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Uphill journey

E. BLESSON ABRAHAM

The nation marches ahead with the idea of Digital India, Start up India, Skill India, thanks to the education system, especially higher education which has contributed in making India a home to the largest human intellectual capital. Yet, the higher education system is riddled with shortcomings even after 70 years of freedom, successive governments and several commissions. The New Education Policy currently being shaped and in the public domain for consultations has to factor some of these concerns to make India vibrant and energetic. That education plays a major role in the development of a country and raises the standard of living is an indisputable fact. India is the third largest higher education system in the world monitored by University Grants Commission (UGC). It stands next only to the United States of America and China. The sheer number of universities, colleges etc make Indian higher education, a complex phenomenon. A peek into the numbers. In the last many years, we haven't seen any big university with scale, size and quality that has been launched by either the state or the central government. Careers360 estimates that by the end of 2019, we will have more private universities than public universities. The numbers with respect to colleges is more aggressive.

In 2010, we had 26,000 colleges — about 9,000 public ones and 17,000 operated by private players. Most states haven't set up any government college for many years. By the turn of 2014, the total number of colleges grew to 36,000 — 10,000 in public (an incremental 1,000 colleges only), while the private colleges grew by 9,000 to 26,000 colleges. Estimates are that in 2019, India would have 58,000 colleges — with just 12,000 colleges being public and 46,000 operated by private players. So, by 2019, we will have more private universities. And even amongst the public universities, close to 79% would be private colleges affiliated to a public university. That would mean that about 85% to 90% students would be studying in a private college or a private university. Whether such a huge number of universities and colleges in the private domain be accessible to the teeming millions of youth with low incomes raises several questions. Many states including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and so on started encouraging the setting up of

private universities. In fact, the states are aggressively marketing themselves and offering incentives. They cut across every political party.

This led to a quantum jump in private universities. In 2014, we had 777 universities — 443 public and 334 private. While private universities increased by 126% in 4 years, the public ones increased by 54%. The figure of 777 is way short of the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission of 1500. The aim should be to arrive at a proper estimate of universities and undergraduate institutions in order to plan for the next 20 years.

Granting autonomy to eligible institutions, identifying Universities with potential for Excellence, coming down heavily on fake Universities, laying down norms for achieving excellence, grading universities are all positive steps but the University Grants Commission (UGC) 2012-13 in its report found fault with the complex affiliation system in higher education. A single University is saddled with the task of governing hundreds of public and private teaching colleges under its purview. The spurt in the number of colleges in the garb of expansion of higher education in a short period has led to a drop in quality. Commercialization is another major concern for students from middle class and lower middle class families who cannot access higher education. Students are left with no other option, but to join a private university or a college paying lakhs of rupees as fee. This prompts the students to search for jobs and work. In this context, the Telangana Government's KG to PG plan is a welcome gesture but it is yet to take off. The Gross Enrolment Ratio continues to be low as also the number of youngsters entering higher education institutions. As of 2013, we had 29.6 million students in higher educational institutions which would reach about 36.5 million students in 2016 and by 2020, we will have 48 million students. Based on our population trends and Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) targets, by 2030, we will have 88.7 million students seeking higher education. As of now, the responsibility of creating supply to meet this demand is largely fulfilled by private players. Quality of faculty and infrastructure are crucial to run the wheels of higher education. The governments at the centre and states need to allot more funds for infrastructure, research and initiate steps to address the issue of shortage of qualified faculty and eventually attract students for higher education. Recruitment of able faculty is a pre requisite as it influences

the quality of research and knowledge generation. Delayed recruitments in Universities force them to run on skeletal staff and those on contractual basis, a move which is doing no good.

While subsidies extended to students is positive to bring about some inclusivity, it poses an additional burden on the State exchequer. The skill gap among students who are rendered jobless after their education is a case for concern and calls for an overhaul of the curricula offered which can blend theory and practice. Hands on training must be dovetailed into the courses. At the same time governments should put in place policies which can generate jobs. In several cases students opt for higher education only if employment opportunities, placements are guaranteed and also because they failed to gain entry after their graduation.

Successive reports of the Ministry of Human Resource Development addressed the issue of Gross enrolment ratio as the gap in the male-female literacy rates stands at 30 per cent at the PG and higher education is not so huge. The inference is that the gap in the male and female enrolment in higher education is not because of the growth in the enrolment of girls but due to the decline in the enrolment of boys. The number of youngsters entering the portals of higher education is appallingly low. The literacy rate among the age group of 15 to 24 is 90 percent in 2015 despite the several government schemes to mould youngsters with the sole aim of 'employment generation'. A major challenge before the governments, universities and colleges is to offer a vast pool of subjects and educate parents and students that there is life beyond engineering and medicine. This can be achieved by organizing education fairs at various places like schools and colleges which can educate parents and students on the plethora of avenues available. Private organizations and NGOs working in the education sector can also be mobilised for this task. If India is to compete in education on the global map and emerge as the best education hub, reforms are imperative. Higher budgetary allocation, strengthening infra, recruitment of highly qualified faculty, are crucial to facilitate quality research and make universities incubation centres for new ideas. The priority should be to provide quality education which is accessible and inclusive. The tasks are cut out, it is for the government to pick up the gauntlet.

Build capacities

SRIVEDA BASWAPOOR

Education shoulders the biggest responsibility of shaping the future of the nation. The higher education system in India has grown immensely, particularly in the post-independence period to emerge as one of the largest systems of its kind in the world. However, the system has many issues of concern like low enrolment, commercialization and quality.

A closer look at higher education in India from a national and a state perspective. Today, the country lags behind in the number of so called 'best universities' of India. One needs

to really dig deep to understand the complexities involved in the system as a whole.

The universities have to perform multiple roles like creating new knowledge, acquiring new capabilities and producing an intelligent human resource pool through teaching, research and extension activities to balance both demand and supply in the market.

It is an indisputable fact that education has drifted from its noble cause and has become more of a business. Anybody who wants to mint some serious cash opens colleges. A

majority of institutions are after donations and profits. It is more like a 'hunting season' of the year during the beginning of the academic year. Exorbitant fees charged by private institutions make education unaffordable to a vast majority. All the economically challenged students should be given scholarships regardless of their caste. There is either lack of seats to accommodate the rest or seats are available in colleges nobody has heard of.

The relevance of higher education to job market conditions is another pressing challenge. The gap between education and employability is widening. The curriculum is more towards rote learning and less focused on research and development. Surprisingly 85 per cent of graduates

are considered unemployable due to lack of relevant industry experience. Only 15 per cent of students are lucky enough to get into industries related to their field of study. The introduction of national skill development programmes is a way to meet the demand. Creation of an entrepreneurial environment in universities, by setting up incubation centres will help students connect with their field of study and the placements they take up. Academic reforms are the need of the hour so that capacity building can take place. From the knowledge a student receives from education he/she should be able to transfer it into skills to meet the needs of the problem of employability. Only then can we seek a brighter future in terms of education and can also enable powerful social change and development.



Prof. S. Ramachandram, Vice Chancellor with the Osmania Courier team

TASKS AHEAD

Maintain quality in research, teaching
Streamline Governance
Sustain UPE status
NAAC Reaccreditation
Act on encroachments
Modernise Hostels
Persuade overstayers to evict
Organise Centenary celebrations
Mobilise alumni

Brand Osmania can be on par with Stanford..

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Private Universities

A native of Nalgonda district, Prof. Ramachandram, said that private universities play an important role as it is not possible for the government to provide education for such a huge population. But at the same time, he does not see them as competitors. In this context, the Vice Chancellor said that he is talking to faculty members to brace themselves up for the competition from private universities by enhancing their competency levels. "Teachers should augment the teaching- learning process, research, governance and modernize, to face this competition."

Curriculum

Prof S Ramachandram said that the CBCS (Choice Based Credit System) is a flexible framework which offers a choice to students. They not only study core subjects, but also electives. In addition to this, the CBCS is also a system which makes the curriculum globally compatible and facilitates migration of students from one university to another across the nation. The system provides interdisciplinary courses, skill-based courses, and also value-based courses. Osmania University is at the forefront to embrace all which will help students to become employable.

It is being introduced at all levels, including UG levels from this year, he disclosed and asserted that the University would overcome likely problems in the path of implementation over a period of time.

Regarding NAAC re-accreditation which is pending for the past two years, Prof S. Ramachandram said last time, the University was accorded the highest grade but the administration did not make an application for accreditation as there was no full-fledged Vice Chancellor "I have reviewed the preparations for the visit of the NAAC team after I took over and also consulted the NAAC authorities. The authorities have suggested that the University submits an updated self study report (SSR) as a year has lapsed after the SSR report was submitted. Also, the NAAC has brought in some changes in the accreditation process," he observed and expressed confidence that the entire process would be completed by February next.

The University is currently engaged in gathering information pertaining to the one year to be incorporated before resubmission of the fresh SSR. He also said that he was speaking to all the

Principals and Heads of Departments to highlight the importance of NAAC and prepare them for documentation. They are all positive and preparing to achieve the highest grade this time as well.

Governance

On governance, Prof S. Ramachandram said a report about the financial status of the university would be prepared and submitted to the Government. He mentioned that there was a deficit of more than Rs 100 crore. Relating to the governance aspect, there are a lot of vacant posts and the VC said that he wants to restructure all the departments and take a holistic view of the requirements of the staff and faculty members and give a realistic report to the government for which they are willing to help.

On encroachment of University lands, a committee will be appointed shortly to examine this issue. "This is a socio-legal issue. We will talk to the people and counsel them and then take appropriate action to evict them. The Government would also be consulted on this issue," said Prof Ramachandram.

Research

Research would be under greater focus during his stint, he stated and revealed that the university has mega plans to step up research activity, strengthen infrastructure and encourage faculty members. Already, young faculty members are being encouraged by granting them "seed money" of around Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh to kick-start their research as all of them have completed their PhDs and want to pursue further research.

In this direction, the VC said that the University would incentivize research so that their work is given recognition. Next, researchers would be prodded to go for patenting. A cell for creating awareness between the faculty members and research scholars to know the importance of patenting would be set up.

Further, after patenting, the University will help researchers to market their products. He said he would encourage students and faculty members to go for incubation.

He stated that the University College of Engineering will establish an incubation centre very shortly.

On the much-delayed Phd admissions, the VC said the matter was in the court because of various reasons. "I would prefer PhD enrolments take place every year and in time," he said, smiling.

Student issues

Prof S Ramachandram did not mince words to identify student discipline as an issue. He said that the response from students during his interactions was encouraging. Students realized that they should attend classes, interact with faculty members, engage in research activities and make use of the facilities so that their objective is fulfilled. There may be occasional disturbances which will be tackled through counseling and by taking appropriate action if needed. There will be a continuous effort in this direction. On non-payment of mess bills, the VC said that it is fortunate that the state government has covered this bill to a certain extent but still there are students who haven't paid yet. "This has become a burden to the university. A closer look at the problem revealed that the huge deficit was because the Government sanctions an amount which is just one-thirds of the mess bill. We will recommend an increase in the mess charges to the Government." On the sensitive issue of non-boarders occupying hostels, the VC replied that some of the overstayers have heeded to his words and vacated while some asked for some extra time. The VC exuded confidence that this issue will be solved.

Foreign students- skills

When it was pointed out that foreign students lack or have poor English skills, the VC said that the Centre for English Language and Training is offering a programme where the students can learn English language. He admitted that some of them pursuing engineering courses also lack skills in mathematics, physics and chemistry. He said he had already spoken to the Director General of ICCR, to conduct a bridge course. In that case, the admissions will take place in advance so that it does not derail the academic year and the University will plan academic courses accordingly, he stated.

Modernization of hostels

Hostels will be modernized with new amenities in kitchens, messes, washrooms and new structures to increase capacity. The VC admitted that during his visits he found that in some hostels the conditions were poor. Some should be shut while a few need immediate maintenance. He said he intends to make hostels livable.

Centenary

With the centenary celebrations slated to commence from April next year,

the Vice Chancellor revealed that University administration has already submitted a proposal to Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister for Human Resources, for financial support to the tune of Rs 100 crore. He expressed optimism that the Government will consider their proposal and sanction the amount. Heritage structure like the Arts College will be protected and properly maintained through these funds, he added. "I am fortunate to be the VC this year. We will soon create a portal so that all the alumni of the university across the globe can be reached and invited for the centenary celebrations."

OU - Global Expertise

Prof S Ramachandram said that Osmania University has the competency to teach what is being taught in reputed Universities like Stanford or Harvard. He feels that if faculty members are willing to work hard and encourage students, OU can compete globally. On this note, he stated that "People make the difference".

Message for students

The VC said students get into Osmania after facing a fierce competition. Students should spend their time fruitfully to meet their objectives. He pointed out that there is no shortcut to success and the only way is to work hard, work in a team and to work smart. He advised students to learn to face the tough competition outside. Learning is a continuous process, it never ends, so the students should strive to accomplish their goals and be successful.

The other side

Responding to some personal questions on how he destresses himself after the hectic work in office, he said he doesn't feel the stress as he takes every problem systematically and resolves it. "If you like your job, you do not feel the stress."

He also mentioned that he gets a lot of cooperation from his better half.

On being asked how he sees himself, as an academician or an administrator, Prof S Ramachandram said, "he is an academician first who then became part of the administration. A person needs to excel as an academician and eventually become an administrator," he wrapped up.

Osmania Courier team- LATCHAYYA, ANANTHA LAKSHMI, RENJU JOHN DANIEL, Y. FRONIA PRISCILLA, SHARIFULLAH AYUBI

BRAOU mulls online courses

SRIVEDA BASWAPOOR &
M. RAVI SANKAR REDDY

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University is in consultations with University Grants Commission (UGC) for introduction of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

According to Prof. K. Seetharama Rao, the newly appointed Vice Chancellor, the issue to be resolved is one of jurisdiction. "Every university operates in a certain jurisdiction. In the case of online courses, this will not apply because students from anywhere will be able to register," he said. Speaking to Osmania Courier on the sidelines of a press conference recently, Prof. Rao pointed out that in the future, a blended learning, composed of classroom learning and inter-action through technology, would become the norm in higher education. "However, the digital divide in society today poses challenges for this blending. As the University lacks sufficient financial resources, we are seeking help from the government and other national and international institutions," he said. The University is also gearing up to implement the Choice-based Credit System (CBCS) from the next academic year (2017-18) on a par with formal educational institutions. "Adoption of the CBCS is a major challenge for us," he said.

As part of the new system, the University will have to offer choice to students to opt for any one subject outside their chosen stream in each semester. This is part of an initiative to promote interdisciplinary thinking and to vocationalise higher education to make the graduates employable. In the immediate term, the University is conducting a massive special drive with the aim of graduating 1 lakh dropouts belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Telangana state. To make the drive successful it is taking steps to set up mandal resource centres.

"The University works under the institutional vision of the founder Prof. G. Ram Reddy and the social vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar," said Prof. Rao. "The University's motto is 'Education at the Doorstep' and it offers a second chance to students who have missed out on earlier opportunities to develop multiple competencies."

According to Prof. Rao, both formal and non-formal education should coexist. "At



present, we meet around 30 per cent of total enrolment in higher education in Telangana," he said. The University is looking to update its syllabi and launch skill-based, job-oriented professional courses, and programmes for capacity enhancement. It plans to introduce Master's courses in International Business Studies, Mass Communication and Journalism and a few more along with PG diploma courses in practical accounting.

The Vice Chancellor also noted that there were no issues arising out of bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. Out of its 219 study centres, 92 were located in Andhra Pradesh, while the rest are in Telangana. The University currently enrolls more than 1,65,000 students every year. "After the state bifurcation there has been a marginal decline in the number of admissions from Andhra Pradesh. Even prior to bifurcation the intake of students was only 40 per cent from Andhra region. From the beginning, student enrolment from Telangana region was higher," said Prof. Rao.

"The scrapping of the fee reimbursement scheme by the government has also affected the intake of students," the VC revealed.

It is planning to start basic bridge courses, which will provide a flexible academic system, to attract more students. The University is also looking to fill up 30 faculty posts as the government has given its nod. At present, there are 60 regular faculty and 450 non-teaching staff members in the University.

"To create employment opportunities for our graduates, we have entered into collaborations with many reputed institutions like Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), NIIT, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, and Rehabilitation Council of India, New Delhi, for B.Ed. (special education)," said Prof. S.V. Rajasekhara Reddy, Academic Director.

Prof. Khaja Althaf Hussain, who was recently appointed VC of Mahatma Gandhi University, was a gold medallist in M.Sc. Physics who rose to the position of Professor in Physics, Kakatiya University, Warangal. With almost 34 years of teaching and research experience, Prof. Hussain has 39 national and international research publications to his credit. He was invited to speak at the Indian Science Congress held at Kolkata and University of Florida. He is presently Member of Board of Studies in Physics at both Osmania University and Sri Venkateshwara University. Following are a few excerpts from an interview he gave to A.V. Ananda Raju.



Learn life skills

OC: What are your vision and goals for the university?

AH :During my tenure, I will work to see the University scales heights and emerge as one of the best universities in the State. My first goal is standardization of academics of the university. Second, is to see that students attend classes regularly. The student community for the last few years is disturbed and I want to bring the students out of these conditions. My responsibility is to make them attend classes and ensure that they see a career growth.

OC: Have you decided your thrust areas ? Is there an action plan to achieve them ?

AH First, my focus would be on research. Of course, we can't produce good research without good academic scenarios in the classrooms. Ensuring good classroom teaching to the students is another priority. I want all my teachers to strictly adhere to the academic requirements of the university. All these are possible when the students' community is determined to grow. I have been assessing the conditions in the University after I took over two months back. I will come out with a plan to achieve my priorities and goals in developing the university.

OC: What are the challenges you are likely to face?

AH: Financial crunch is one of the major challenges, which I will face. We need to construct new buildings, good library and develop lot of facilities for the students as well as for the teachers in the university. I am sure this government is focused on developing education. I foresee wonderful cooperation from the government.

OC: How will you deal with student related issues in case of conflicts and how will you increase their employability?

AH: Few days back, I read a new in an English daily that the President of India Pranab Mukherji delivering a speech at Nalanda University felt that university is the place where there should not be prejudice and there should be freedom of speech. I strongly believe in these words. Universities are places for a variety of thoughts when one can say that I belong to a thinking group. Among students also, there will be groups with divergent views. I will invite every school of thought without any hesitation and resolve issues within the frame work of rules of the academia.

Because of the technological development and expansion of corporate job market, skill development has gained prominence. Without life skills, the students can't achieve proper growth in their career and their lives. Language is no barrier to learn life skills. With the skill development programmes, the university will try to produce candidates in tune with the requirement of the corporate job market.

OC: Any message for the Telangana youth ?

AH: After achieving Telangana state now we have to excel in self-administration. Telangana is a budding state. It has gained the tag of the most prominent state in the country. We should continue to repeat the same performance every year. The role of the youth is nothing but to excel in their respective professions and do their duty with dedication. This would automatically develop Telangana.

OC: How do you think your experience has shaped you for this post ?

AH: I am appointed to this post because of my academic credentials. I am student oriented. I always behave like a teacher than an administrator. During the past three decades, I gained enough understanding of the requirements of institutions, teachers and students and how to deal with them and their issues. These factors made me a good administrator.

OC: Any expansion plans and can we see introduction of new courses in the near future?

AH: Obviously, I will try to explore the possibility of growth of higher education in this region. For that I need to do basic study on the requirements and work. It may take at least one year. Because, first of all, I should come to an understanding of types of institutions under my jurisdiction, their performance in the past two years and the intake of the students. We are planning to launch Department of Education in the University soon, as 33 B Ed colleges are operating in the region. Presently, Osmania University is monitoring the B Ed colleges and the burden hampers quality. But, we are not planning to run B Ed course in Department of Education as already there are sufficient number of colleges running in the region. My focus is to facilitate students graduating from these 33 B Ed Colleges to do their M Ed Course in my university.

Presently, there is no plan to launch courses in Journalism and it may be possible only after a year.

OC: What kind of support are you expecting from the government?

AH As the university is facing a financial crunch, I shall seek the support of the government in the form of grant-in-aid. I will submit some proposals to the Government for development of the university.



Teaching, research top agenda of Kakatiya Varsity VC

Kakatiya University's newly appointed Vice Chancellor, Prof. R. Sayanna is a highly accomplished Professor of Physics, with 31 years of teaching experience and specialized in the subjects of Digital Logic Design and Instrumentation. Solid State Physics and Fourier Optics are his areas of research study, and he has authored 18 research publications and two books. He has held significant positions in administrative capacity as Director, Publications and Press, OU and as Additional Controller of Examinations (UG and PG). He is one of the founder members of Society for Advancement in Solid State Sciences. He is a member of various academic committees and Boards, and holds the position of Chairman of Board of Studies in Physics, and also in Hearing Language and Speech.

In an email interview to **Jespal Singh K and Shekar Sivarathri**, Prof. Sayanna, Vice Chancellor, said, catapulting Kakatiya University on to the educational map of the country as a leading institution imparting multidisciplinary education in a conducive ambience with innovative teaching practices, quality research and inclusivity is the vision nurtured by him. Prof. Sayanna shared the goals and the resolutions he has in store for the University.

Retaining the "A" grade accorded to the University by the NAAC tops his list of priorities, he said and the entire University administration will be galvanized for this purpose. He added that NAAC accreditation was long overdue. He further said that he would strive to submit proposals to national funding agencies to tap grants for the



Prof. R. Sayanna

development of the University under various schemes. Next, he intends to strengthen infrastructural facilities for class room teaching and research. Introduction of biometric system to improve student attendance is also on the agenda. A former Professor from the Physics Department of Osmania University, Sayanna has set several short term and long term goals for himself. Streamlining governance to make it more responsive, transparent and efficient is one such goal. Strengthening of curricular aspects and building of teams for fortifying the industry-varsity linkage is in the offing. The VC hopes to come up with some twinning programmes wherein students can earn even as they work towards their degrees.

"The University is an integral part of the society and we have to give back to the society. Extension and outreach activity will be stepped up. Working with due diligence to achieve academic excellence

and overall development of the University is bound to act as a guiding force", he said.

Warangal has a rich history and has produced several stalwarts in diverse fields, including academia. The University was carved out of Osmania University and serves the student community in Warangal, Khammam and Adilabad districts. "I am positive about expansion of higher education without compromising quality. I am presently assessing the nature of courses being offered by the University which offers conventional courses at the Under Graduate and Post Graduate levels. Also, there are vocational courses offered in distance mode. I will engage in reviewing courses offered in reputed universities and their best academic practices. After this exercise, I intend to launch courses with job potential. My intent is to prepare students who can compete at the regional, national and global levels", said the VC.

Speaking of challenges he is likely to face, Sayanna, with over 30 years of

teaching and administrative experience, listed two crucial aspects. "Finances and shortage of faculty are the most pressing issues. I will urge the State Government to enhance the block grant as it is inadequate to meet the wage bill of the Faculty and staff. Also, there has been no faculty recruitment for quite some years, and the University is short staffed. In addition, a good number of senior faculty members are retiring every month. There is a need to take up faculty recruitment immediately."

A strong believer in the dictum, "Learn to serve and serve to learn," and in team work, Prof. Sayanna asserted that he would adopt an open and flexible approach to deal with conflicts on the Campus. He revealed that he would engage all stakeholders- students, teaching and non-teaching faculty to arrive at concrete, practical solutions within the frame work of the University statutes and ordinances.

The University has centres like Centre for English Language Training, NET coaching Centre, Coaching Scheme for entry into services for SC/ST students, Kakatiya Adhyayana Kendram, B.R. Ambedkar Studies Centre. These centres would be further strengthened and appropriate measures would be formulated for skill enhancement of students for employability, he said. "The youth of Telangana is active, intelligent and dynamic. The innate energies have to be harnessed and integrated with academics", he pointed out.

Thanking the State Government for reposing confidence in him, Prof. Sayanna said that he would give his best to serve the region and measure up to the expectations of the teaching, student community and the Government.

"I have hopes and expectations riding high on me"

Greatness is a matter of conscious choice, and nothing could ring truer in the case of Prof. S. V. Satyanarayana. A prominent writer, retired professor of Telugu and former Principal of the iconic Arts College, Osmania University, Prof. Satyanarayana has now donned a new role- he has taken over as the 10th Vice Chancellor of the prestigious Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University. In an interview with Courier correspondents **P.Srinivas and B.Santhosh Kumar**, he shared his take on the pressing issues facing the university and the goals he has set for himself. **How did you feel when you came to know that you have been appointed the VC of PSTU?**

My family has been my constant source of support all my life, and it is thanks to them that I have come this far. On getting the news, my first realization was that of the high expectations riding on me. The people of Telangana look forward to radical change, because a true Telanganite is the VC now. I do not foresee



myself bringing in changes overnight, but I hope to bring about transformation gradually. For example, renaming this University as Telangana Telugu University is a dream of many Telanganites, and I would like to achieve this cause by the end of my tenure as VC.

How do you propose to highlight and promote the role of Telugu literature from Telangana region?

I find it worrying that we have plenty of books on Telugu literature, but all revolve around

Andhra Sahityam- with their entire focus on the literature of the Andhra region, with no mention of Telangana or its rich cultural and literary heritage. The Telangana slang itself is so unique that there is a need to compile a separate dictionary on the same. The university is presently named after Potti Sreeramulu, and I suggest that it should be renamed after the legendary writer cum poet form Telangana, Palkuriki Somanatha, to reflect the true legacy of the region. Despite

certain clauses laid down in the Tenth Schedule of the AP Reorganization Act, there will be no hurdle in renaming the University. I also intend to solicit support from local politicians to protect the land donated to form "Telugu Bhasha Peetam" at Nalgonda by fencing.

What kind of financial support can be expected for research? How do you plan to attract and aid research scholars?

Emerging writers and research scholars of Telangana are always welcome here. The University can help ensure financial assistance up to Rs. 1.5 crore for five years by seeking research grants of UGC by setting up a 'Classical Chair' along with a centre of excellence.

Telangana is a hub of talent, art form and folklore, and we find many prominent writers, poets and artists who have contributed to the growth and development of Telangana culture. Research in these areas should be promoted. The contributions of noted poets like Dasharati Krishnama Charya,

Kaloji Narayana Rao, Bhagaiah, Gangula Sai Reddy, Andesri, Suddala Hanmanthu, Gaddar and Goreti Venkanna which hitherto went unnoticed, are now being recognized and can form subjects of research. What measures would you suggest to balance Telugu language in education laterally with the English- medium education (KG to PG scheme) planned by our government? So far, Telugu was an 'optional' subject/language, even at the school level. This practice must be discontinued and Telugu made a compulsory paper for all students, even to natives of other states, till the under-graduate level. We are planning to recommend this measure to the Education minister and Deputy CM, Shri Kadiyam Srihari.

With your vast experience in the field of academics, what initiatives would you take for the benefit of students?

I will be pro-student, pro-teacher, pro-employee and pro-worker, but only within the framework of rules and regulations. I will never grant individual favours.

'Employability is my top priority'

Prof. A. Venugopal Reddy, who recently took charge as the Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU), has an impressive resume that few can match. With three books and 85 research publications (25 national and 60 international) to his credit, Prof. Venugopal served as Professor, Computer Science and Engineering, for 17 years and also as Dean, Faculty of Engineering, at Osmania University, Hyderabad. He has also guided several research scholars and he himself has 22 years of research experience. He has held several responsible positions throughout his career, including that of Convenor of PGECET, Principal, University College of Engineering, and Chairman, Board of Studies. He spearheaded path-breaking research in the field of Mobile Computing and Image Retrieval Systems.

In an email interview to **Ashish Rana Chauhan**, he shared his plans for the University.

Excerpts

Raising employability of graduates coming out of the colleges is one of the main goals of Prof. A. Venugopal Reddy, Vice Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University Hyderabad. Prof. Reddy said, "The engineering graduates passing out of affiliated colleges may require a few more skills / knowledge for their placement. We have plans to interact with industries for more internships to the students which will enable the student for his/her placement."

Finishing schools with specific concepts in association with industries and



Prof. A Venugopal Reddy incubation centres for start-ups were also being planned for improving the employability, Prof. Reddy said.

The first technological University in India is also encouraging all colleges to apply for accreditation by the National Board of Accreditation.

"Being accredited by international bodies will bring recognition to the quality of undergraduate engineering education. It is an avenue to take the colleges into the world class category. It encourages and facilitates the mobility of engineering graduates and professionals at the international level," Prof. Reddy noted.

JNTUH is the largest affiliating university with more than 300 institutions offering UG and PG programs in Engineering, Sciences, Pharmacy and Management. The University has four constituent colleges in Telangana.

According to the VC, disaster management; computer-aided design

and engineering; VLSI and Embedded System Design; and Data analytics and cloud computing are the thrust areas for the University. "This is based on the expertise available with faculty in the university," he said.

Prof. Reddy pointed out: "The University plans to work closely with the industries by taking up sponsored research. The faculty members will be encouraged to apply for more patents for the innovations carried out by them."

Giving details of the research in JNTUH, Prof. Reddy said the University constituent college at Hyderabad and the Institute of Science and Technology (IST) have been identified under TEQIP-2 project with its main focus on enhancing the research facilities with a funding of Rs. 30 crore in addition to awarding one centre of excellence for Disaster management.

"There is lot of scope for further enhancing the quality of research by strengthening the research facilities. The faculty members will be encouraged to publish their research work in standard journals. They will be supported to participate in sponsored research and obtain patents for their innovations. We will also provide financial assistance to attend international conferences abroad," said the Vice Chancellor.

Regarding complaints about a lack of qualified faculty in private colleges, Prof. Reddy said that there has been a sudden increase in the demand for teaching faculty in recent years because of the large number of colleges affiliated to

JNTUH and starting many new courses at undergraduate level and at post-graduate levels in the recent past.

"To meet the AICTE norms, the colleges recruit faculty based on their intake. To meet the shortage of faculty, there may be a few cases where students are joining in the same college opting for the teaching profession. Though they choose to work in the same college where they studied, they should also go through the selection process on par with others as stipulated by the university, UGC and GOs. However, the instances of joining the same college as teachers may be minimal," said Prof. Reddy.

Further, he pointed out that the University was addressing the issue of shortage of doctorate faculty by encouraging research (on-campus as well as part-time). "It may take some time to fill up the gap," he noted.

Regarding student complaints about evaluation pattern, Prof. Reddy said the exam branch has a fool-proof and transparent system of evaluation that does not give any scope for favouritism.

"Since large volumes of answer scripts are to be valued in the specified time, the university necessarily depends on many examiners (subject teachers from affiliated colleges). This may lead to some inconsistency in evaluation resulting in variation in award of marks to the students. However, this issue is also addressed by providing detailed scheme of valuation to all the examiners and involving senior teachers for valuation," the VC said.

Empowering youth is our goal: Palamuru varsity VC

Prof. B. Rajarathnam, Professor of Commerce, Osmania University, appointed VC of Palamuru University, has 25 years of teaching experience. Though his subject specialization is Human Resource Management, he has been working in the Area of Rural Development with special emphasis on Tribal Development for the last 22 years. He was also a recipient of the Teacher Doctoral Fellowship of I.C.S.S.R. in 1999. He has 13 research publications in national and international journals, and has attended 27 seminars and conferences. He has held several positions in administrative capacity such as NSS Programme Officer, Additional Controller of Examinations, OU and Special Observer for conducting of Examinations (PGRRCDE).

Excerpts from an email interview given to D.P.Dheeraj

What is your vision for Palamuru University ?

Palamuru University is an upcoming state university with seven years standing serving the predominantly backward

and tribal areas of Mahabubnagar and adjoining districts. Taking into account, the progress made here and the problems it is beset with, my vision is to shape the institution as the new destination of higher learning in the State of Telangana where quality education is imparted with equal emphasis on promotion of research and innovation and to develop the employability skills among the students and scholars.

What are the goals/objectives you have set for your self?

My goals are as follows :

- * To go in for NAAC Accreditation
- * To start research programmes in select disciplines
- * To seek sanction of the State Government for regular teaching and non-teaching posts for different courses
- * To strive for enhanced block grants for the university
- * To expedite the faculty, staff recruitment and regularization

What are the challenges you are likely to face?

The challenges are . First, paucity of funds (meagre allocation of block grant) and critical shortage of teaching

and non-teaching staff.

Often there is a conflict with students on certain issues. How will you tackle them?

The issues students bring forth often pertain to amenities and support services. Being a new university some of these are not fully developed. As ours is a growing residential campus, we try to attend to the students problems/ issues on priority basis and convince the students wherever necessary.

Are you planning to expand Higher education in the region?

The region needs expansion of opportunities for higher education. The carving of new districts opens up further possibilities. Palamuru University is alive to this concern and will plan accordingly.

Any new courses in the near future?

From the sustainability perspective, we plan to introduce M.Sc Environmental Science course. We are reviewing the requirement of other new courses at our PG Centers.

What role do you see for youth in the development of Telangana?

Youth are the driving force for the resurgence of our new state of Telangana. The new state holds promise and potential for our graduates in terms of employment generation and entrepreneurship development. But they need to be equipped with modern curriculum, new skill sets, positive attitude and value system for life to avail these opportunities in the new environment. The universities, colleges and the faculty on one side and the students with a changed mindset towards studies and outlook for life on the other hand should come together in the success of this mission.

Often students remain unemployed after completing their courses. How will you equip them with skills to become employable?

There is a general concern over the employability of our graduates. We are of the view that mere churning out of graduates with degrees devoid of purpose and direction in life is not enough. We need to empower youth and shape them for societal responsibilities.



Prof. B. Rajarathnam

ties through dynamic curriculum and development of soft skills with focus on personality development.

Any other information specific to Palamuru University.

The University has made a mark in different spheres in a short span of seven years of its existence. It offers 17 PG courses at its main campus and three constituent PG Centers at Gadwal, Kollapur and Wanaparthy. Wide-ranging UG and professional courses numbering around 30 are being offered in over 140 affiliated colleges. It is ahead in implementation of progressive academic measures such as CBCS and Semester System. It has obtained recognition of Pharmacy Council of India for its B.Pharmacy course and NCTE approval for its M.Ed course.

TSCHE looks beyond enrolment

Cont'd from page 1

Enhancing employability is possible only with rapid 'Urbanization' and 'Industrialization' on a large scale. The problems can be addressed by recruiting experienced faculty and improving the quality in teaching. Such efforts should be dovetailed with the various government schemes like 'Make in India', he added. On the lack of infrastructure and quality faculty in various institutions state wide, he said that TSCHE has shut down nearly 100 non performing engineering colleges in the last two years for not following the norms set and warned colleges of dire consequences if found wanting. He stated that the Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao was very serious about non performing colleges and wants strict actions to be taken against them. Admitting that there is



employment exploitation in some colleges, he attributed this to the demand supply equation. The council has taken stringent action against college managements on receipt of complaints, he revealed. Emphasising the importance of practicals and projects which are integral to the courses, he asserted that, Information & Technology

(IT) minister K.T. Rama Rao encourages all universities and colleges to enter into tie-ups with the industry. This helps students to adapt themselves to the industry conditions very soon, he pointed out. On other steps taken by the Council, Prof Reddy said that the government is planning to launch a website giving the complete

educational profile of students pursuing higher education and those who passed out to curb the presence of fake certificates in the State. The data can be accessed by prospective employers to ascertain the genuineness of the candidate's credentials at the time of recruitment. If anyone is found to be carrying fake certificates, the companies may either inform the police or deny the job, he informed. The online admissions at the undergraduate level will improve next year and he termed it a 'good system' through which 1,90,000 students could be enrolled in various colleges. The council is working on streamlining the biometric system to check impersonation during entrance exams and also to record student attendance, he observed. With regard to the leakage of EAMCET exam question papers recently in the state, he blamed the printing press and organised mafia involved in this racket.

The crime syndicate should be punished, he said and recalled that the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has advised the police to not only nab the brokers and the culprits but also those parents who tried to access these papers with the help of the brokers by bribing them. Post-bifurcation, the dispute about distribution of assets will be settled through arbitration or through legal means. Prof. Reddy stated that the Government is already planning to go for a curative petition following the rejection of the Special leave petition by the Supreme Court. Lamenting that the value system among students has "reversed" he shared that his secret for a successful life include hard work, discipline, no shortcuts, respect for teachers and elders and principles.

Osmania Courier team: E. BLESSON ABRAHAM, PRASHANTH DESHINI, MOUNIKA, PRASHANTH

RESEARCH IN BRIEF

Representation of Disabled People in Print Media in India

SANTOSH KUMAR BISWAL

Media, being the fourth pillar of democracy, have the responsibility to address the issues of various disadvantaged sections of the society including disability. The current study attempts to ascertain the status of disabled and their rights in India; to study the role of media in protecting the rights of the disabled in India; to explore the representation of the disabled in the Indian media; to examine the coverage relating to the disabled in print media in India; and to understand the influential factors behind disability representation in the Indian media.

The coverage of disability was examined in two major English dailies – The Hindu and The Times of India in 2013. The Hyderabad editions were part of the study and had 47 and 42 items which is not very encouraging.

The study found that disability issues were covered mostly in the city pages in both the dailies. Their coverage in editorial and opinion pages was scant. The coverage from the dimensions of gender, geography and types of disability remained skewed. There was more coverage in December and remained ceremonial as there was the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in the given month.

When the nature of discourse on disability issues were probed, it was found that the media played the role of a mediator instead of news-giver. There was ambivalence in terms of news and views and hence, the credibility of news organisations was questioned. The response of the disabled, the disabled rights activists, media persons and media educators was mixed and there was a blame game.

“Participatory video (PV) and its Impact on Communities” (A study of Community Video Units)

ANIL KUMAR

Participatory communication enables people to learn more and reflect the same in their new way of doing things. Video as an alternative way of dissemination, is mostly known as Participatory video. PV provides an opportunity and ability to transfer information into a visual, moving image. The study envisaged to identify the functions and implications of Community Video Units (CVUs) in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states. The theoretical framework for the study was Paulo Freire's (1970) "Conscientisation", critical consciousness and dialogic mentioned in his book

"Pedagogy of the Oppressed". Paulo Freire coined the term "Conscientisation," which entails the raising of consciousness of one's environment and situation, one's abilities and identity, and "one's alternative for freedom of action".

The study adopted the qualitative approach and examined five case studies, four from rural areas and one urban. For instance, one Case Study begins with Participatory video in the context of children - Video active Girls (VAG). The study analysed the use of Participatory video for adolescent girls in a Muslim locality in the Old city of Hyderabad, Telangana State. Detailed description of people's actions, behaviours, connections and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience were taken into account.

The research found that integration of Participatory video, digital technologies, which were neglected in CVUs could be used for sustainability of PV as it had the potential to influence decision-makers. PV has developed a more proactive approach to help foster local community from the beginning of CVU. The data indicated that videos play an important role as an organizing structure around which dialogue occurs and social action happens. Communities were also keenly aware that the PV was not any one personal vision but rather a representation of a group of people and realised the potential to impact marginalized communities..

Uses and Gratifications of Internet: A study among college students in Hyderabad

SHARADA G

The Internet has revolutionized communications, to the extent that it is now our preferred medium of everyday communication. The 1980s and 1990s saw the widening of the scope of Internet to encompass the IT capabilities of universities and research centers, and, later on, public entities, institutions, and private enterprises around the world. The research focused on the attitudes of students of colleges in Hyderabad, Telangana State, towards learning through the Internet and the Uses and Gratifications they derive.

A wide range of Internet services and resources are used by college students in Hyderabad and they mostly use email, WWW, IM and FTP. There was a clear pattern of high frequency use of various Internet services. Few students said they used college library e-resources at a low frequency.

The respondents were motivated to use Internet for communication, information seeking, developing

and maintaining online and social interaction, entertainment, coping with peer pressure, escaping from problems, improving personal status, and interactive control.

It was also noted that Internet uses and motivations were related to demographics, level and years of study, gender and time spent online per week.

The study found differences in social, academic and personal needs/interests, vis-à-vis demographics. A few challenges mentioned by respondents include - lack of awareness on e-resources, lack of proper direction and encouragement from teachers on use of references browsing the Internet, poor connectivity and difficulty in finding relevant information due to inadequate Internet skills.

Influence of mass media on teenagers' diet and health related behaviour

M.MAHESHWAR

This study explored the influence of mass media on adolescents' diet and Health- Related Behaviour (HRB). Specifically, the research sought to assess media viewing habits of teenagers and their exposure to and adoption of media content on diet and HRB; ascertain teenagers' perceptions and practices of diet and HRB; examine the influence of mass media, if any, on diet and health related matters of teenagers. The study was a cross-sectional survey of 517 respondents using the stratified random sample drawn from 21 high schools and junior colleges under the Greater Hyderabad municipal limits. Of the total 517 respondents, 253 were boys and 264 were girls.

The data revealed the hidden influence of mass media on teenagers' consumption of alcohol and tobacco products. Nearly 24 per cent teenagers were influenced by mass media towards this unhealthy practice. Teenagers used these products to imitate media visuals; film actors; television advertisements/celebrities; and visuals of YouTube/Internet. Mass media influence on teenagers varied broadly based on their families' economic status viz., higher income group, middle income group and lower income group. Boys from middle-income families were under greater influence of film stars and consume alcohol and tobacco products to imitate their actions on the screen. Analysis highlights the variation between same age group children and between gender usage of media, understanding of media messages and health related behaviour. Levels of influence differ between genders.



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Our Leading Lights

Prof. G. Kumaraswamy, former director of Defence Electronics Research Lab and Electronics Systems Engineering Centre, was associated in work with Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in the "Integrated Guided Missile Program, and was personally responsible

for the design and development of a number of missile guidance electronic systems for Trishul, Prithvi and Akash missiles. Prof. Kumaraswamy is the Director of R&D at Bharat.

Dr. R. Srihari Rao, is pre-eminent scientist with a PhD from IIT, Kharagpur. He previously served as the Director of DRLR, and as the Vice Chancellor and Chancellor of KL University. He has carried out indigenous development of EW Systems, Laser Systems, Command and Control Systems, Electro Optics Thermal Imaging and Night Fighting Systems. He has published extensively.

Prof. P. Padmanabham, Ph.D. (CS), FIETE, FIE, served previously as Professor of Computer Science and Director School of Information Technology at JNTU-H. With over 40 years of teaching and research experience, he has authored three books and over 100 scholarly research articles.

Dr. Subir Kumar Chaudhari, is a product of IIT, Madras and holds a PhD from Cranfield Institute of Technology, UK. He is a specialist in Electronic System Design and Flight Control Systems. He has over 13 years experience as a research expert at DRDL. He also worked as a lead research positions in RCI. He is a recipient of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai Research Award (1994) & a number of Technology Awards at DRDO.



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J Hub- an 'innovative initiative'

LATCHAYYA ANANTHA LAKSHMI
AND N. SUSHMA

Prof. Ghanta Chakrapani, Chairman, Telangana State Public Service Commission, asserted that skill advancement was imperative in every sector in 'start-up Telangana' for development and growth.

Inaugurating the 'J-Hub', the Journalism Industry Incubation Centre on August 9, he lauded the initiative of the Department of Communication and Journalism to hone and nurture skills of students desirous of learning journalism skills.

Stating that the dynamics of media have undergone a sea change, he pointed out that there was a greater need to sharpen the analytical and feature writing skills.

"Developments in the media have widened the scope for journalism students. Today, television journalists are multi-tasking and performing the tasks of anchors and presenters. Same is the case in print media where reporters are also copy editors," he observed.

Prof. Chakrapani urged the University authorities to address the issue of staff shortage in the Department, and wanted mentors to be associated with the J-Hub. He exhorted the University to lend strong technical support to the efforts of the faculty to prepare students for the industry. Prof. S. Ramachandram, Vice Chancellor, Osmania University, observed that technological advancements should be leveraged by journalists to provide accurate, impartial, unbiased views and comments for the readers.



Prof. G. Chakrapani, Chairman, TSPSC, greeting Prof. S. Ramachandram, VC., as Prof. E. Suresh Kumar, Registrar, OU, looks on

"There is a movement for incubation across the country through government initiatives like Stand up India, Digital India, Skill India, T Hub, etc. Because, only 10 per cent youth, out of the country's 65 percent, are employable," the Vice Chancellor said and revealed that the figure was dismally low at five percent in Telangana.

In this context, several institutions like the Department of Science & Technology and the Niti Aayog are encouraging setting up of research centres in academics. He advised the Department to formalise the proposed incubation centre and explore tapping national institutions for financial assistance. Complimenting the department, he struck a note of caution and said that the initiative should be

sustained to harness the energies of the youth. "The onus lies on the faculty to sustain this and set a right example for others," Prof. Ramachandram remarked. He also assured the Department of his support.

Prof. E. Suresh Kumar, Registrar, OU, stated that private sector offers more scope for creativity. Prof. Naidu Ashok, Principal, Arts College, also spoke at the event.

Marking the inauguration, the Vice Chancellor released the recent edition of Osmania Courier, the Department's lab newspaper, and launched the J-Hub site (jhub.in) that will curate articles / reports written by students. Prof. K. Nageshwar, Ex MLC, explained the rationale behind setting up the J-Hub in the Department. The J-Hub

would function after class hours and would be open to students from all disciplines. According to Prof. Nageshwar, the idea is to help aspiring journalists to acquire practical skills, given the reality of the market. He said that the students need to acquire skills for a job so that they make a professional value addition to whatever field they are in.

The opportunity that J-Hub offers to the students is that J-Hub guides the student without disturbing their academic studies.

It gives formal, informal and professional guidance and expertise. Earlier, Prof. K. Stevenson, Head, welcomed the gathering and Prof. B. Balaswamy, Chairman, Board of Studies, proposed a vote of thanks.

Pak fomenting trouble in sub-region: Expert

MOHD. ABDUL WASIQ AND
ARUNIMA .V

Dr. Ashley J. Tellis, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, stated that Taliban and Pakistan were fomenting trouble in the sub-region and emphasized that terrorism was a major challenge to USA and the world. Delivering a lecture on "Challenges to US Foreign Policy in Asia" on 24 August 2016 at the Department of Political Science, Dr. Ashley Tellis, highlighting several areas that pose a threat to America's national security in the region, blamed American presence in Afghanistan and the skewed relationship with Pakistan as the overarching framework for his country's foreign policy.

The American scholar said that China, which has emerged as the pivot in the region, is likely to disturb status quo in the years to come. He reminded the listeners that being a challenger nation, China is not likely to abide by adverse results of international arbitration in future.

On economic issues, Dr. Tellis traced the successes of Japan, South Korea, South East Asia, China, South Asia and the possibilities of growth in Central Asia. While focusing on China, Dr. Tellis argued that the United States was responsible for the creation and sustenance of a free trade system in the post war global order. Containing a multi dimensional power such as China, that has replaced US as the principal trading partner of most Asian nations, is a major challenge, he pointed out.

OPINIONS

A long way to go

LATCHAYYA ANANTHA LAKSHMI

Education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think. - Albert Einstein

This quote should act as a wake up call to the contemporary Indian education system, especially higher education which is the mainstay for the socio-economic development. Higher education institutions which ought to be generating knowledge, acting as crucibles for critical thinking and free flow of ideas have been reduced to churning out graduates to join the employment market. Also, they seem to be just imparting knowledge. With changes in the higher global education scenario, and intense competition, students need more of quality higher education. This can be facilitated through an integrated effort of diverse sectors, policies, and institutions like the University Grant Commission amongst others.

Be that as it may, what's the higher education scenario in the newly born Telangana State?

Statistics available on the website of the Telangana State higher education council are not very encouraging. The literacy rate for male and female are 75.04 % and 57.99% respectively for the year 2015-2016. Also, the number of universities is found to be 24 which is below 50 percent of the national figure of 67. There is a steep fall of over 50 per cent in the Gross Enrollment Ratio from 28.4 in 2013 to 12.72 in 2016. The silver lining is that the Plan and Non plan Grants for secondary, higher and technical education departments were increased from 10956.34 crores in 2014-2015, to 11216.09 crores in 2015-2016.

In addition to these are issues related to funds, quality, employment, infrastructure, curriculum, research, access, equity, lack of vision, commercialisation etc.

Access and equity continue to be major problems owing to a number of socio-economic factors which constrain parents to send their wards for higher education. Enrolment of females into the higher education domain,

especially those from villages is low, when compared to the enrolment from urban places.

Funds are crucial for the survival of any institution. Though the budgetary allocation has increased a bit, more funds need to be injected to strengthen infrastructure and meet the needs of several institutions.

Curricula should have practicals and needs to be updated periodically. The emphasis of the industry today is not on marks but experience. Quality monitoring bodies like the NAAC augur well for improving quality in Universities but the shortage of qualified staff is not helping. This issue needs to be addressed on a priority basis.

Eventually, the final destination after education is settling down in life with a job in hand. For a student to be employed, a minimum experience is a must and nowadays recruiting students as interns is becoming a trend. This is where the student potential and capacity will be tested for a period of time and this is mostly why educational institutions need to provide quality education.

Focus on 3 Es

M.RAVI SANKAR REDDY.

The Higher education system in India is the single largest provider of global talent competing with developed countries. To quote, "China will face a shortage of skilled workers while India is likely to see some surplus of graduates in 2020."

Higher education is critical for developing modern economy as it equips the young people with skills relevant in the market. The major initiative on the development of higher education was during the Eleventh Five year plan (2007-12). To continue the focus on higher education, the Government of India in the draft Twelfth Five year plan (2012-2017) laid emphasis on higher education focussing on 3Es - Expansion, Equity and Excellence.

However, the Plan proposes a paradigm change in the way such goals are achieved - through three new principles. First, an emphasis will be given to quality - as further expansion without quality improvement will be a serious problem for India. Second, the Plan also strives to diversify higher education opportunities, not only to meet the needs of employers, but also to offer a wide range of paths to success for our youth. India must develop world-class research universities as well as have sophisticated teaching institutions to impart key vocational and generic skills in a timely manner to cope with the rapidly changing labour market needs. Third, this excellence in diversity will be implemented through governance reforms, to enable institutions to have the autonomy to develop distinctive strengths, while being held accountable for ensuring quality.



Prof. V. Shekhar, Principal, UCCBM

N RAJASHEKHAR,
FAREESA IRSHAD

Management graduates should innovate and think out-of-the-box to join the shrinking job market which has become more competitive, said Prof. V. Shekhar, Principal, University College of Commerce and Business Management.

In an interview to Osmania Courier, Prof. Shekhar said that jobs are fewer and those with an innovative approach can survive. Attraction and interest in courses are evoked through innovation. What matters is “out-of-the-box thinking,” he observed.

Emphasising the need for practical application of the theoretical concepts, Prof. Shekhar said that in MBA, application is the key as in engineering. Being theoretically strong with such conceptual clarity can

benefit students. This comes through reading text books. “Unfortunately, as the exam pattern focuses on scoring of marks and percentages these issues are conveniently ignored,” he remarked.

Management students should shed their fixation for scoring high. Instead they should enhance their creativity, he observed.

Prof. Shekhar, a visiting professor at an institute in Bangkok, urged students to take the two-month project seriously as the project work is invariably neglected. The “solution is the student himself,” he said, and added that students should be more cooperative in this endeavor.

On the emerging streams in management, Prof. Shekhar said, irrespective of the specialization—marketing, finance, human resources or even the field chosen, students

ought to be updated. According to him, service marketing is one of the emerging fields in management.

The quality of the faculty in affiliated colleges is “fairly good” but not much is happening in research in terms of outcome. He sees the trend of engineering graduates opting for management education positively. “The combination of engineering and management is very good. Engineering students are analytical and statistical and as management students they can apply the subject knowledge as well,” he pointed out.

Disclosing details of the collaborative efforts, Prof. Shekhar said that the Department was associated with National Police Academy and College of Defence Management (CDM). Also it has a tie-up with Owaisi Hospital and Apollo Hospital in hospital management.

SCIENCE EDUCATION

Present perfect, future tense

K. ANILATHMAJ PHANI KUMAR,
N. SUSHMA

The science stream in the University is doing well and its standards are on par with other universities, said Prof. V. Uma, Dean, Faculty of Science, Osmania University. Prof. Uma is proud of the increasing number of scholars from different sections of society. She pointed out that scholars with agricultural labour background, weak English language skills and little knowledge about work ethics had submitted their articles to international publications. Their only input was that they used time judiciously, worked and excelled under our mentorship. Backed by sound decision-making bodies in place and updated curricula, pure sciences in the University have the potential for excellence, she said, adding that good infrastructure, state-of-the-art laboratories, huge funding have facilitated the launch of various schemes for the benefit of the students. Prof. Uma listed lack of fresh recruitment of faculty and funding as major problems in the Science departments. “This has resulted in a drop in the faculty strength. Irregular funding by the MHRD for



Prof. V. Uma

researchers is another issue. We are in the red,” she noted, adding that the future is uncertain for the institution, research scholars, teachers and retired teachers. There is a delay in payment for appointed teachers and for pensioners it is an unending wait, she said. She warned that after 2018, one would be hard-pressed to find professors with experience in most of the departments. This has to be taken cognisance of by the powers that be. “At present, most departments have junior-level faculty, who are yet to gain experience in designing syllabi, etc. Appointment of teachers should be a priority or at least the government should increase the retirement age. If not, the system will collapse,” she said.

Govt. nudge must for hassle free legal education

JESPAL SINGH K &
SHEKAR SIVARATHRI

The curriculum for legal education in Osmania University is quite competitive and comparable to that in the National Law school, said Prof. GB Reddy, University College of Law.

The College, one of the oldest institutions in the country established in 1899, has of late introduced papers in Intellectual Property Rights, Alternative Dispute Resolution and International Trade & Economic Law, the emerging areas in legal education. This is in addition to nearly 50 papers offered during the five year span, he pointed out and identified lack of infrastructure, and poor financial aid from the centre and state governments as posing a threat. Judicial patronage is tilted towards National law schools, he remarked.

Despite the lack of patronage and other issues, the college has embarked on a series of steps to strengthen legal education. These include: updating and revising curriculum on a regular basis, strengthening the library, subscription to online law journals, supreme court cases and conducting moot courts



(L to R) Prof. K. Panth Naik, Principal, University College of Law and Prof. G.B. Reddy

every year. Guest lectures, regular interaction with bench and bar, coordination with the judiciary are other initiatives. Every year we conduct national workshops to maintain standards, he remarked.

Students intern with advocates, the high court, Human Rights commission and the CCI. Court visits, jail visits and a visit to the Supreme court annually is a must to gain experience. Every student needs to spend at least 15 days with a senior advocate of 15 years standing every year.

“Shortage of staff is another major concern as senior teachers are due for retirement and we have a young crop. This short

supply needs to be addressed shortly. The required scholars quotient is coming down. There are only a few experts left. and they publish books, conduct seminars act as resource persons and draft bills,” Prof. Reddy regretted.

On the status of research, Prof. Panth Naik said, “We are content with the research output.” There are 100 scholars who are enrolled for the PhD programme and each year an average of 10 obtain their doctorates. All the faculty have a doctoral degree barring a few, he revealed. “Most of our products end up with advocates. Legal process outsourcing and real estate firms also recruit our students.”

When asked about new career opportunities in legal stream, he replied, “The law is dynamic. Earlier, one had the only option of practicing law but today a student with good academic record has so many opportunities like taking up higher studies, joining the lower courts, corporate sector, working as analysts to interpret material in legal journals. They can work in law reporting, legal editing, as law officers in banks, companies and in the government sector. They also have opportunities in cyber security, e-commerce, entertainment and international investment law besides the voluntary sector.”

The Bar Council of India insists on maintaining a teacher-student ratio of 1:40, minimum qualification for lectureship like National Eligibility Test, State Eligibility Test, PhDs, and good infrastructure. Also the number of books to be purchased, number of classrooms, size of the classroom and moot courts are a must. The University inspects every law college before the commencement of academic year. Similarly, the Bar Council inspects them after every two to three years, he said.

Both the Council and the University are taking steps but the State Government should

step in, Prof. Panth observed and added that the government should treat law as a professional course and give it due recognition, accommodate students in its schemes, give apprenticeship to students and attract the best talent to legal education and the profession.

On collaborations with industry, Prof. Reddy said, “We collaborate with the National Industrial Security Academy and train CISF personnel. NISA and the Law College offer certain courses to CISF personnel. We partnered with the World Intellectual Property Organization when we launched the PG Diploma in IPR.”

Giving his message to students, he said students should pursue legal education as it offers opportunities. While working as interns they can learn and earn, and they will land up with jobs provided they have a sound and updated understanding of law—theory and practice, good language and articulation skills, and updated knowledge.

There is minimum or no pressure on students, deadlines are few or manageable. Students can take part in moot courts and if their basics are right, the opportunities are plenty.

'Social sciences edn. needs paradigm shift'

PRANITH K. REDDY,
BHOOMPAG. JACOB ROSS

The hour has come for a paradigm shift to restore the past glory to social science education in Telangana which has seen a steady decline in the recent past due to the lopsided priority to science, technology and management and gross neglect by universities and the Government, observed Prof. M.Channa Basaviaiah, Director, Indian Council of Social Science Research.

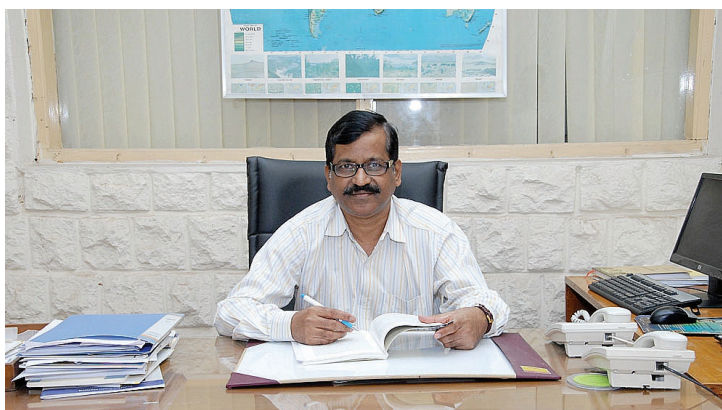
Social sciences have to capture the complexity of Indian society which has witnessed marked changes during the past 70 years from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, Gujarat to Assam Nagaland etc. A social scientist has to make a lot of effort to understand analyse and theorise the current phenomenon, he added.

There are two paths in social science research, he said. One is an individual pursuing research on issues relating to the society, polity, economy, culture and history. Second is the Government, International bodies, NGOs, World bank which seek the help of social scientists to provide inputs

on policy making and policy evaluation and in implementation of programmes, he pointed out. Individuals gain national and global recognition based on their research but there should be collective and collaborative research at departmental level, he observed.

Social scientists and activists played an important role in Telangana movement which may not be conspicuous but the writings have aroused sentiments among the people to participate in the struggle for a separate state he said and rued that their efforts have not been recognized. The student community from social sciences and faculty also played a crucial role in Telangana agitation with the dream of Golden days ahead after the formation of the state. He expressed the hope that the dream would come true.

The Government is taking initiation to encourage higher education and social sciences by introducing their pet programme which they have promised in the manifesto. He asserted that there is a need to indulge in sloganeering KG to PG. There has to be a document and an implementation policy.



Prof. M. Channa Basaviaiah

He advised the government to constitute a committee of educationists and social scientists to study and explore the possibilities and submit a detailed report to take further initiatives. He insisted that the government to conduct seminars, workshops, symposiums, discussions and lectures to debate issues and take the inputs in preping a vision document and scheme of implementation.

He recalled that Soroush Vosoughi submitted a report on "World social science" in 2007, which articulated the importance of social sciences and recommended steps to bring back the glory of social

sciences. The governments should have political will to consider the recommendations and implement them in Telangana State. One should have direction to implement exclusive social sciences. The Government should concentrate on higher education as it played a significant role in the Telangana struggle, he averred.

The central government should encourage new methods of teaching and learning. New trends have to be promulgated and they have to be multidisciplinary. Mixed methodology can be a positive aspect. These require new theories, new inputs, new kinds of analysis in order to

grapple with the contemporary problems of society. He quoted the education system and importance of social sciences in United States of America. The business schools in America have social science faculty teaching policy risk analysis in all the streams of education such as medicine, management, and engineering, giving priority to the multidimensional trends of teaching.

He commented that funding is the major component in patronising social science research and regretted that Universities have shortage of faculty. "Even in Osmania University, the largest in Telangana state, recruitment of staff is long overdue. Staff recruitment should be done periodically and Faculty should not only teach but also engage in research activity.

He stressed that the university and industry should forge linkages to improve placement opportunities like what is done in Jawaharlal Nehru university and Delhi University. Owing to lack of opportunities, engineering professionals and graduates are applying for the post of police constables, which is regrettable, he added.

Engg. education set for turnaround

V. HITESH KUMAR &
MOHAMMED ABDUL WASIQ

Engineering education in the new born state of Telangana will witness a major positive turnaround in quality following the purging exercise of the Government to weed out non performing colleges and those with lack of qualified faculty and poor infrastructure, said Prof. P.Laxminarayana, former Head, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Osmania University. Speaking to Osmania Courier, he said that lack of quality faculty is one of the major issues facing engineering education for the past several years. "New faculty members have been falling short in professional skills. PhD-qualified teachers are not available. Students who complete their graduation are joining as faculty members in the same college and they teach what they were taught by previous faculty and become like news readers."

According to Prof. Laxminarayana, the quality of education depends on the faculty strength, physical infrastructure, classrooms and laboratories. The quality comes with knowledge, training and technology. "Engineering has now changed from 'education' to 'business'. Out of 300 colleges only 20 colleges have proper facilities," he said.

Broadly, engineering has 40 per cent theory and 60 per cent practical components. "But in our system it is the reverse. Although we have enough practical infrastructure like laboratories, instruments and machines,



Prof. P. Laxminarayana

no one is there to teach, train and make use of them," he noted. He said lakhs of engineering students graduate every year. "In this, IITs account for one per cent, NITs for two per cent, and Universities for 20 per cent. The rest of the students are from private colleges. Around 80 per cent of the students are not employable," he

pointed out.

He stated that Osmania University has tied up with TEQIP (Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme) of Government of India. "Under Phase I, the University is mainly concentrating on infrastructure development, and in Phase II, we will focus on technical development. Under this project we are getting Rs 12 crore fund," he revealed. The Department has collaborations with top industries like BHEL, DRDL etc. From III year onwards, students are required to do practical work with industries as part of their project work so that they are exposed to real work environment. "Engineering means identifying, channelising, analysing and giving correct solutions.

In this process, we are taking the help of industries and institutions to help our students face real world problems and make them more innovative," he pointed out.

Ruing that engineering has become like a basic degree that gives eligibility for writing competitive exams, he said: "My sincere request to those who are going to start their career as an engineer, come with interest, choose favourite stream and see the strength of the faculty, infrastructure etc."

Yadava Raju stresses basic English skills

V. HITESH KUMAR,
M.RAVI SANKAR REDDY

Dean, Faculty of Arts and former Head, Department of English, Prof.B. Yadava Raju said "the students who join in post graduate courses should have basic language skills because the syllabus is based on literature and not on language. It is difficult for them to understand the subject, he added."

In some cases students join as there is an opportunity or they may have genuine interest in the subject or for other reasons. But, most



of them don't have skills in language. But, after joining the course they should evaluate whether the course suits them or not and cultivate interest as in the English Department the focus is on literature.

Speaking on the general conditions in the University, he said, there is a need to strengthen the teaching faculty in order to serve the students and retain the merit of the University.

Otherwise, it becomes difficult to progress," he remarked.

The University needs radical changes gradually with regard to modernisation of classrooms, access, teaching standards, quality, he observed. Students should not be misled but avail the opportunity in the University which is for study and research.

On the upcoming 100 years celebrations, he suggested that the University should not only project the achievements but also plan for the next five years in terms of maintaining academic standards.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Prof. Ch.Gopal Reddy, Dean, Development and UGC Affairs, Osmania University

Prof.D.Ashok, Director, Directorate Of Admissions

Dr.M.Sanjeeva Rao
Joint Director, Directorate of Admissions

Prof. Sriram Venkatesh
Director, University Guest House
Prof.K. Narender
In charge Director, Educational Multimedia Research Centre

Prof.A. Sadananda Chary
Director B.C Cell

Prof. L.B Laxmikanth Rathod
Principal, University College of Physical Education

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New education policy draft recommendations in public domain

The draft New Education Policy-2016 rightly identifies the lacunae in the higher education system and makes several recommendations covering major related aspects. **Osmania Courier**, lists the Recommendations of the Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy 2016, submitted to Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The report is in the public domain for suggestions. Excerpts of the recommendations:

- The proliferation of privately-run ‘teaching shops’ and so-called non-profit institutions, ill-equipped and operating with unqualified staff, is a disturbing development and needs to be urgently addressed through appropriate measures. The first step is to confront the reality that many private universities and colleges, professional and otherwise, flourish under the patronage of influential people backed by money power with little interest in education, taking advantage of a lax or corrupt regulatory environment.

- It has to be recognised that the higher education institutions are proliferating but there is neither a structured system nor adequate commitment to provide quality teachers commensurate with the increasing demand for higher education. A manpower-needs study must be undertaken every five years at the central and state levels to determine the need for faculty positions in institutions of higher education. The recruitment needs have to be forecast well in advance to ensure that the recruitment action is taken in time. The scope for making appointments based upon subjectivity has to give way to rigorous merit based selection, preferably through the Public Service Commission or an independent body set up for the purpose.

- There is a need to ensure that competent and motivated teachers enter the profession. Innovative options have to be offered to talented students at the class 12 stage from amongst, say the top performers (depending upon projected manpower requirements of specific subjects at college and university level). They could be offered admission in a 5-year integrated course in those disciplines, which would include an emphasis on nurturing teaching skills, research methodology along with subject specialisation. This total period should be fully sponsored from public funds so that the best people are motivated to join the teaching profession in higher education.

- It was brought to the notice of the Committee that the reasons for faculty posts remaining vacant were several. First, there is reluctance on the part of some states to fill posts on a regular basis with the aim of saving the outgo on salaries of full-time faculty. Second, the recruitment process, through the Public Service Commissions is often time-consuming. A large number of teaching positions are lying vacant, especially in state universities and affiliated colleges. The process of recruitment also gets delayed due to litigation. However the alternative of recruiting ad-hoc and part-time faculty impacts adversely on the quality of teaching and research. It has been found that wherever the states have invested in permanent, qualified faculty, the outcomes are far superior and a lesson has to be taken from the benefits

Need to Restrict Political and Other Distractions on University and College Campuses

Agitations, disturbances, gheraos and other disruptive movements are being increasingly witnessed on campuses with potential to interfere with normal academic activities. As a result of this, examinations often get delayed or postponed. These disturbances are generally caused by a small section of politically active students and work to the detriment of the majority of serious students. The Constitution provides every citizen the right to form groups or associations. Every right has a corresponding duty to ensure that it shall not adversely affect the interests of others.

Universities and colleges are temples of learning and some self-imposed restriction should be in place to ensure that the primary work of the universities is conducted without hindrance. Educational institutions should not be allowed to become political arenas to settle national rivalries.

It is essential to find the right balance between free speech and freedom of association guaranteed by the Constitution, with the needs of various sections of society, consistent with the primary purpose for which the universities have been established to enable the pursuit of education.

Election on Campuses

On the basis of the recommendations of the Lyngdoh Committee (2005) the Supreme Court accepted the need for restricting those activities of student unions which could potentially disrupt academic activities of the universities. The issue of the desirability of non-recognition of student groups that are explicitly based on caste and religion needs to be revisited urgently. The overall interest of the bulk of students who attend academic institutions to study must be protected by those that are vested with the authority to administer the universities.

Restriction of the Period of Stay of Students on Campuses

Most of the disruptive activities on the campus are led by students who remain enrolled for many more years than normally required to pursue the course of study for which they have enrolled. The main interest of such students is not to pursue learning but to use the hostel and fellowship facilities to follow a political agenda. There should be a national debate on the need for students to necessarily achieve the minimum benchmarks for scholastic progress to prevent the misuse of educational facilities established at public expense.

of proper recruitment of faculty.

- Overdependence on ad-hoc and guest teachers militates against the quality of teaching. Learning from the experience of states that have invested in the recruitment of permanent faculty, which has reflected in better performance at the college and university level, it is recommended that all state higher education departments devote utmost attention to ensuring that permanent faculty is in position in all their institutions. For this, recruitment action has to start well in time and the absence of regular faculty should become a negative indicator at the time of accreditation.

- Budgetary allocations should be increased and facilities for carrying out research should be improved in order to support good researchers. Policy-makers needs access to good research – however, this element is not usually factored into most research projects; equally policy-makers in general seldom reach out to universities to suggest appropriate research themes on issues of significance, that call for a nuanced understanding.

- To the extent possible, teachers should be recruited and attached to particular

institutions, rather than be part of an organised service where they are subject to frequent transfers. This will help in developing institutional attachment, identification and commitment.

- Accreditation should be made mandatory for all institutions of higher education, including technical education, medicine and agriculture, both in public and private sectors.

Management

- The Committee feels that no university should have more than 100 affiliated colleges, and therefore recommends that universities which have more than 100 affiliated colleges should be split for achieving better academic oversight and management efficiency.

- The Committee is convinced that the present institutional and policy instruments of the Central and State governments to encourage, support, manage and help regulate the higher education institutions in India are largely inadequate and ineffective. The present arrangements do not encourage high quality institutions, nor do they

discourage the non-performers.

- The Committee recommends a revamp of the higher education promotion policies, procedures, structures and institutions. The starting point would have to be creation of a new National Higher Education Promotion and Management Act, supported by state-level laws and institutions, establishment of new systems for recognition, assessment and evaluation (elaborated elsewhere). The underlying principle would be to provide assistance and guidance and mentorship to institutions which wish to improve themselves; to provide full academic and management autonomy to institutions which are at the highest scale; and finally, to weed out institutions which fall below an accepted benchmark of performance.

Regulatory

- The Committee notes that the reality on the ground is that ‘capitation’ fees and extraction of rent from the student is rampant – for some specialized courses in certain fields, the amounts mentioned as capitation fee is very large. The prevailing situation often forces the potentially good institutions to back off, for want of finance; the checks and verifications imposed on all ostensibly to counter malpractices, adversely affects the good, quality institutions, while giving full freedom to the unscrupulous ones. The present evaluation methods are input based, rather than realistically based on outputs or potential outputs. The accreditation / evaluation systems need to be revamped, as suggested elsewhere – for institutions adjudged as ‘quality’, much greater freedom has to be given in terms of fixation of student fees, or faculty salaries.

Research and innovation

- The Committee recommends that over the next decade at least 100 new centres for excellence in the field of higher education need to be established. If this is successfully accomplished, it will pave the way for India to host major research and innovation initiatives.

A climate needs to be created to facilitate establishment of 100 such institutions, both in public and private sectors over the next 10 years. To achieve this, a regulatory regime conducive to encourage/ establishment of such institutions of excellence needs to be put in place.

- The Committee proposes the establishment of a Council for Excellence in Higher Education (CEHE) by the MHRD to create policies to foster the establishment of Centres for Excellence, both in the public and private sectors. Identified existing institutions, both private and public, based on an evaluation could be brought into the purview of this Council.

- India must strive hard to find a respectable place in the field of research and innovations. Towards that faculty induction and promotion procedures must be transparent, rigorous and designed to accept only the intellectually inclined. The API must be replaced by more scientific procedures of assessing the quality of contributions which need not necessarily be only publications and attendance in seminars.

FOCUS POINTS

Curtail teaching shops
Recruitment of quality, committed teachers
Increase budget
Establish Centre for Excellence in higher education
Task force on promotions
Mandatory accreditation for all higher education institutions
Forge international linkages
Higher education fellowship fund
Management Act